



THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF STOUGHTON

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Peace and blessings!

To say that we live in strange and interesting times may be a massive understatement. Yet if we step out of our immediate experience and take a broader view then it becomes apparent that every time comes with its challenges and its graces. It just happens that sometimes one or the other is more readily apparent. It's also true that the level of challenge or grace we experience is in part a consequence of how much we've allowed the light of faith to illuminate how we see our lives.

We could grumble and wish that we weren't living in Covid-time with masks, distancing, and everything else, but we could take a different view. Instead of grumbling, we could accept that God has allowed us to live in this time and we can look and see what He's cultivating in us and through us. It's with that latter perspective of a reasoned optimism based upon the goodness of God which I have experienced in the course of my life that I have the privilege and joy to present myself to you as your new pastor.

For the past five years, I have served our Archdiocese as assistant vocation director and I loved that ministry. I would have been content to continue in that role for another year or two, though my ability to live it out had become somewhat limited of late due to Covid restrictions, but I can honestly say that when the phone rang and I was presented with the opportunity to become pastor of the Stoughton Catholic community my heart immediately leaped at the opportunity. Prior to my time in the Vocation Office I served as parochial vicar of the Triparishes in Brockton. It was during that time that I had the opportunity to get to know the Stoughton parishes, although having been here now in Stoughton formally for a few weeks I realize that what I got to know of Stoughton in the past was only the tip of the tip of the iceberg. What I've seen during these few weeks, particularly the warmth and the faith of the people I've encountered confirms God's goodness to me in bringing me here.

I know that our Stoughton Catholic Community is facing many challenges. We need to continue our journey through Covid-time and we need to be creative and committed to planning how we will emerge on the other end of this experience. We also need to realistically look at the state of our finances and facilities in order to plan for parish life beyond the immediate pandemic reality. I will be sending you another mailing about that in a few weeks. We have to look at our body of worshippers, particularly at how we can further come together as one community of faith with two Churches and a dynamic, diverse body of believers that worships in several different languages. I am not a believer in spiritual silos or ghettos so it is of utmost importance in my mind that we honor our diversity while also strengthening our unity. We also need to look at those who have stopped coming for one reason or another and those whom we have yet to invite to join the body of Christ. In other words, there is much work to be done, but none of this is a cause for dejection or despair. Instead, it's a blessed opportunity to put ourselves before the Lord in prayer and to ask Him what exactly it is He's leading us to do in this time and this place.

I know He's asking me to pray and to work hard for His glory and for the good of all the people of this corner of His vineyard. Count on my support and my prayers. Know that I will always be willing to listen to your needs and concerns, and know that I am open to hearing your ideas and hopes about how we can fulfill God's desire that our parishes be vibrant and strong communities of faith where all are called to discover

God's love, to share their gifts, and to begin to taste in this life the eternal glory which awaits us in the life to come.

I am abundantly blessed by the team that I'm serving our communities with. I've known Fr. Eduardo since my time in Brockton, and I count him as a friend and someone I greatly enjoy sharing ministry with. I'm also blessed that Fr. Daniel Zinger has also been appointed to serve our Stoughton Catholic Community as a parochial vicar. Fr. Dan was ordained a priest on August 1 of this year. I was blessed to meet Fr. Dan through my work in the Vocation Office and to get to know him through his years in seminary. He brings a great zeal, fluency in Portuguese and Spanish, and a desire to serve our communities of faith. In addition to my brother priests, our communities of faith are blessed to have two wonderful deacons and a great lay staff. God has truly blessed me with a great team.

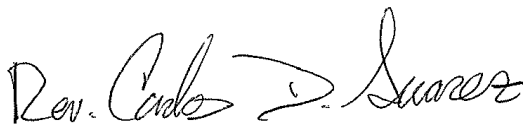
However, my gratitude to God for giving me a great staff is just the beginning. I know I've also been blessed by God in the fact that He's called all of you reading these words to be members of our community of faith, and that in each of you God has placed gifts and talents, many of which you've shared to His glory and the service of His people and many more that still need to be cultivated.

Our Stoughton Catholic Community is facing several challenges and difficult decisions in the relatively near future. However, if we believe in the promises God has made and fulfilled already in our journey of faith, we know that these challenges are not an invitation to throw in the towel and give up. Rather, we need to redouble our prayers and to put the future of our parishes squarely before God asking Him what He wants us to do.

I firmly believe that God wants to do amazing things in our Stoughton Catholic Community, and I know that each of you, and many others, are being called to be a part of this grace-filled venture. Please join me in praying for our parishes, in listening to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and in working hard so that through our efforts God may be glorified and many more people may come to know His love.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and to serving with you in this corner of the Lord's vineyard. If you have ideas or suggestions of what we can do to build up our communities of faith please let me know. You can reach me at csuarez@stoughtoncatholic.org or at (781)886-6057

In Christ's Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Carlos D. Suarez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Carlos D. Suarez
Pastor, Stoughton Catholic Community